MISSIONS NEEDFUL TO THE CHURCH

DR. WILLIAMS

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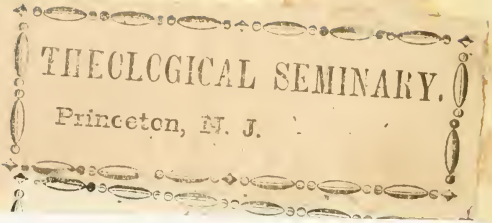

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MISSIONS NEEDFUL

TO THE

HIGHER BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHURCHES.

A DISCOURSE

AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOCIETY OF INQUIRY OF THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 4, 1856.

BY

WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS.

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MISSIONS NEEDED

FOR THE

HAPPINESS OF THE CHURCHES.

"—— AND TO REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS HOW HE SAID: IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."—ACTS, XX. 35.

THESE words of the Redeemer do not appear in any of the Gospels. All the discourses and acts of Christ, if recorded, would form, as John tells us, a vast library, such as the Church would find it difficult to copy or to distribute, and which the world would be loth to receive, and the convert even be unable to study and to wield. Every utterance of those divine lips was wise and gracious. Each such sentence, had it been registered, would have deserved to receive, and it would have received, the adoring homage of good men. But the Saviour habitually exempli-

fied the very sentiment that He here enunciates, by giving without caring in turn to receive—by giving much of instruction that, as He knew, would miss the long recollection and the large gratitude which it merited to obtain from our race. It was truth, for the hour and scene most timely and most fitting; but having accomplished that present purpose, He, our Great Teacher, flung it freely forth, with a profuse munificence, to receive in men's after commemoration of it no adequate honors. The seed, which this Great Sower scattered, went forth much of it upon the way-side, and fell on earth's stony places; to be choked and supplanted in the mind of many a hearer by the next gossip of their native village, and by their next chaffering in the market-place or at the way-side inn. But what of His teachings was needful for all times He caused to be harvested into the gospels, by gleanings from "the good ground," —the retentive heart, and the inspired mem-

ory of His apostles. And thus, even in His own discourses of matchless wisdom and majesty, He delighted to "give" more than He was ever to "receive"—to communicate with a Godlike lavishness very much that man would fail aright to value, or for any long time to remember.

This saying is recorded as having been adduced by Paul on an occasion that illustrates how a saintly generosity, in endeavor and in sacrifice for the good of others, is to be sustained by a wise parsimony in the use of time. He is on his hurried way to Jerusalem. Ephesus is near his path, but he can not pause there. For three years he had taught the Christians of that city with a holy assiduity, earning the while his own livelihood. But the having given to them so much of time already is not, in Paul's view, cause for his giving them no more. Yet duty to others prevents his now giving much. And only keenest thrift in the employment of his days

allows his expending any hours upon them. But he can send for their pastors to meet him at Miletus, some thirty-six miles away, in a hurried interview. To the three years already bestowed of life, and toil, and care, he would add this conference, intercalated into a long and perilous journey. And into this way-side homily of the Apostle, the Holy Ghost caused him to imbed, for the profiting of the churches in all after times, this lesson of our Saviour's, that else had disappeared, securing in Scripture the setting of a gem that otherwise might have been irretrievably lost. In this sea-side parting the heroic confessor and martyr of Christ reminds us what had been the Master's statement as to the Law of Happiness. Paul had himself acted upon it; and he bequeathed it to the disciples at Ephesus and to the Christians of our own time as well.

Man is so formed as to crave, with an ineradicable, and unappeasable earnestness, hap-

piness. It is a principle wrought into his very being. Now blessedness is the term of the Bible for happiness, as being felicity in the highest degree, and in its innermost reality. Blessedness is Delight made sacred. It is Joy suffused and glorified with Devotion. It is Happiness as blended inseparably with Holiness. It is Pleasure, as that word is understood upon the Delectable Mountains, whose summits command the vision of the Shining City. It is bliss, such as man had before the Fall, when he walked Eden in fearless, filial colloquy with his Maker—such as man shall have again in Paradise after the Judgment day, when having become perfected in sanctity he shall be also perfect in felicity. Man, since his apostasy, would fain rive asunder the happiness from the holiness; and banish the devoutness, as inimical to Freedom and Delight. But the will of the Creator in that matter will override the insane and suicidal wish of the rebellious creature. Rest

can not be found out of the presence of the God of Peace, and apart from peace with God. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," cried the old church father, "and we can not be at rest until we have found Thee!" To man's importunate cravings for repose and joy Christ appealed by opening His Sermon on the Mount with the traits of true happiness. In calling back the race to loyalty and bliss, He, their loving Deliverer, as He flung abroad over their necks His own light yoke, taught them that this yoke was made up of all the constituents of a genial and gracious rest. It was as if our Lord had said: "Ye would have happiness, learn its rudiments. Would ye be blessed? From me hear who are the blessed for all worlds. For, the rest —the peace—the joy—the beatitude—is in these graces which ye are now invited to learn and that I am ready to impart." We are accustomed to speak of the Beatitudes only as they were delivered on a mountain

side in Galilee, not far, it may be, from the inland Lake of Gennesaret. Listen to the echo of those Beatitudes as enunciated by the same Lord, but coming to us, in our text, from the shore of the blue Ægean Sea at Miletus. Who is there that yearns not for happiness? It is the child's day-dream; and remains, under his wrinkles and gray hairs, the hunger of the old man's heart. The English poet Byron, after draining to the bitter dregs the cup of worldly fame and revelry, spoke of himself as deeply moved by the inscription on an Italian tombstone: "Implore peace!" He had himself sought fiery joy, and now despaired of poor, tame peace. At the feet of the Prince of Peace, where rest was never yet sought in vain, let us ponder, with prayer for God's own Spirit to help us, the lesson of our text, as to the sources and safeguards for the happiness of His people.

I. And first, let us dwell upon the sentiment taught;

II. Next observing, how the world questions the principle;

III. But lastly, see, in the Foreign Missions of the Churches, the truth realized and repeated anew, to win our sympathy, our belief and our obedience.

1. Who says this; and on what authority does the maxim come to us? The Pentateuch tells of the patriarch's seeing the angels of God encamped at Mahanaim. But the Bible makes no stay to dwell on that vision, reserving its notice for Peniel, the spot where the Maker and God of the angelic host met His servant. One Peniel outweighs many Mahanaims. So should it be with us as to the principles of duty and of hope. And even so, if perchance all the sages of our own race and all the intellects of angels be found uniting in one sentiment, the whole embattled Mahanaim coalescing in their judgment and unanimous in their deliverance, yet to a

devout thinker all this compacted authority would be outweighed by an oracle proceeding from God himself. Tell me not what Philosophers say, or what codes of Legislation may proclaim; but tell me what my Maker, my Ruler and my Judge thinks as to the duties, and what He purposes as to the destinies of me, His handiwork, and me His liege vassal. Now, in the New Testament, the Christian enjoys his Peniel, a scene of direct conference with his Maker, and where Heaven utters its own fixed and perfect law. Here Jehovah shows Himself "in the face" of His own Equal Son; and confers "face to face" with us upon our needs and our hopes. In this Lord Jesus Christ we behold "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." What is the old Peniel, awful and glorious as its brief flash of majesty really was, when once compared with this new, and nearer, and more lasting one? Here the conference is prolonged, and the

access free, and the fellowship fraternal. Out of that elder interview man came a halting, worshipping Wrestler: out of this closer, latter, and longer conference, the man comes a forgiven, cross-bearing Giver.

But not only is God's face seen in Jesus of Nazareth; and that Christ is not only the manifestation of the Father: He is also the Coming Judge of quick and dead. At His sovereign behest, the beatitudes of our own and the angelic races will be apportioned. The man whom He blesses on that day shall be blessed; and who may reverse it? But the man or seraph whom He refuses then to bless, can find in all the wide universe neither refuge nor solace. All to him will be a shoreless, homeless, heaving deluge of despair.

Such is the authority, then, on which the maxim before us rests. It is announced as an axiom by the Son in whom the Father showed himself to the world—that Son by whom the Father will judge all worlds.

2. The Father, we next observe, in whose name this Son spoke, and of whose nature this the Only Begotten One partook, has Himself *acted, in Creation and Providence, on the principle of our text.* In the sense of needing them and of depending upon them, He, the Infinite and the Blessed, *receives nothing* from all the numerous tenantry of His wide and populous universe. He *gives,* without weariness, without ceasing, without stint; and opening His hand, continues to satisfy the wants of every living thing. And this underived, this unbalanced and unreciprocated giving, is the joy of that Being who is infinitely and eternally Blessed. He addresses to each being, in all the shining ranks and hierarchies of Heaven, the same challenge that His apostle makes to each man of our race: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" All your mercies, powers, and enjoyments, are boons obtained from Me, or loans intrusted to you by Me. I, the Fount-

ain of life and joy, give to all; but who claims to have given, who can give to Me? The joy and work, then, of the Infinitely Blessed—the Only Potentate—the Only Wise God—show that to give is more blessed than to receive.

3. The Human Nature, again—the Incarnation and Redeeming Mission of this same Lord Jesus Christ—presented a yet more glorious illustration of the same principle. Uncompelled and uncompensated, unasked and unaided, ay, and even altogether unappreciated, He left the heavens to bring pardon and life to man upon the earth. Not that He, for himself, needed more happiness, but that man was sold else to all unhappiness. This it was that stirred the compassion of God, and originated the ransom to be paid on Calvary. The Son of Man came not to experience but to bestow kindness—"not to be ministered unto, but to minister." So loved the Father a revolted world as to give His

own Son for them; and so did this Son love that race—a suicidal, fratricidal, and Deicide race as it was—that He yearned to give Himself a ransom for them. Had man written the Parable of the Prodigal Son, he would have painted the forlorn spendthrift as earning, and so receiving a recall. He would have portrayed the poor exile as scraping out of the sale of the husks saved from the trough, and hoarding out of his scanty wages as swineherd in the far and strange land, the sum necessary to buy back the father's property that had been squandered; and so reinstating himself under the parental roof by a reformation of his own achieving and a restitution of his own winning. But as the fact was, and as God painted the fact, it is the Father that graciously cancels the fault, and sees the prodigal in his forlorn and penniless destitution, in his blushes and in his tatters, and runs to fall in forgiveness on the penitent's neck. The Godhead incarnates

itself to sink down, in the free boon of pardon, on the bosom and heart of our degraded humanity. His native Divinity was competent for miracles of bodily healing; but more was needed for His wonders of healing to the sin-stricken soul. The touch of His hem was enough to stanch the blood of the invalid for so many years a sufferer. But to send life into the soul, it was needed that this hem should be moist from the sacrifice of Calvary —that His raiment should become, as the Apocalypse describes it, "a vesture dipped in blood," and that the blood of its own Divine wearer, the flow of His own rent veins, and the outgush of His own broken heart. His word and His glance could, at any moment, create a world, or call a whole system of worlds to flash at once into being. But more than look or voice of God—His own death—was needed to ransom a world. And so He emptied Himself of His proper and hereditary glory, and was found in fashion

as a man. He "gave"—in His own language, as put into the mouth of one of His own prophets—"gave (His) back to the smiters and (His) cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not (His) face from spitting."* And for the joy that was set before Him, in bestowing upon us, at such a cost, a free forgiveness, "He endured the cross, despising the shame."

4. And He has renewed the echo and image of His own free sufferings, in *the sacrifices that His people have incurred* and that they have welcomed *for His sake, and only in His strength*. As Satan was "a murderer of men from the beginning," receiving and exacting the life that he, the Destroyer, never could have given, so Christ has been—in His inspiration of disinterestedness within His own servants, in His sympathy with their labors of self-renouncing charity, and in His perpetual Headship over that body, the Church,

* Isaiah, l. 6.

of which charity is the life and bond—He, Christ, has been a Sufferer, MURDERED OF MEN from the beginning. Well did He know that, from the first to the last, His victories, both in His own person and in the persons of His living and faithful members, must be those of heroic, gracious, and unappreciated endurance. As, even after the Ascension of Jesus, Paul filled up the measure of the afflictions of Christ which was behind,* so the patriarchal confessors filled up the afflictions of Christ which were before—preceding and in advance of their Master's advent. Not by any means in the sense of merit and of atoning efficacy claimed for themselves, did Christ's forerunners or His successors thus round His testimony; but in the sense merely of reflecting over all dispensations the light of His grace, and flinging back from the saints of all ages the lustre and the spirit of that one Sacrifice and one Salvation, in whose light

* Colossians, i. 24.

they saw light, in whose love they learned love, and in whose life they imbibed life. And thus, in His own spirit and temper coursing through all the veins of his mystical body, Christ has been, from the first generation of revolters, and in his murdered servant Abel, to the times of Zacharias, and Stephen, and Antipas, "His faithful martyr," down through all His persecuted and martyred confessors to the end of time, "*giving*" Himself to be the hunted, rejected, and slaughtered Victim of the race that He came to enfranchise and to sanctify.

And the experience of Christ's people, imbued with His Spirit, has found this obedience to the principle before us not only tolerable, but delightful; not only more excellent, but more full of enjoyment. The yoke has not galled the shoulder: nor has the burden, even when it not only bowed but plowed the back, and let out the life, been other than glad to the regenerate heart. Having Christ given to

them, they *give* themselves to the Lord, and to His Church, and cause, and work, by the will of the Lord. Love, free and joyous, becomes the master principle of their obedience. It shouts from the midnight stocks in the dungeon at Philippi, where this Paul with Silas lay bound for Christ's sake. It brightens into exultation the offering of Paul's life, when poured out as a libation on the sacrifice and service of the faith of the churches. Hear the apostle proclaim his own impulses in all his fervid and untiring activity: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

And so to give, they have found blessed not only as delighting, but as ennobling them, by giving elevation to the character and breadth to their views, and wide expansiveness to their sympathies. Finding their incentive, and their Exemplar in the All-sufficing and Unchanging God, their labors are not to be checked by temporary reverses, nor their affections to be chilled by man's persist-

ent ingratitude. Their nature has been exalted by thus lifting itself out of the rut of mere Precedent, and soaring out of the narrow dungeon of Self, and above the circumscribed fence of Fashion, into the Illimitable love of the Unforgetting and Unchanging Jehovah. Even in the physical world, it is hard to obtain any extended field of vision by looking around or below. It is won only by lifting the eye upward, and looking *above* and off from our tiny planet. A man can see *far* only as he looks *up*. In the clear day, he sees in that direction hundreds of thousands of miles all the way to the sun. In the bright, starlit night, he sees to the fixed stars myriads of myriads of miles beyond the sun even. The Christian finds it the same in the *moral* world. To God and to the revelation that He has made in His Son, and in the book and the cross of that Son, must darkling man look up, if he would discern afar off, either as to the old past, or as to the far future. Let him, for

knowledge, or feeling, or incentives to energy, look elsewhere: and he is soon dejected. His horizon is a cribbed and restricted one. Looking only inward to his own heart and intellect; or looking around to his fellows, to schools, and to libraries; or looking below, into mines and strata, and sea-deeps, and Tophet, his view is of necessity narrow, and circumscribed, and cheerless. But lifting his eye upward, what upper deeps of unsearchable wisdom and exhaustless goodness—what life-giving warmth from the unsetting Sun of Righteousness, risen on the soul with healing in His wings, does the believer find. His purpose, with the Psalmist's, becomes henceforward this: "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." And thus going out of the finite, to the Infinite, and rising from the creature to its Author, and thus breaking the bounds of earth, and sense, and time, to

lay hold on the Boundless One the Omnipresent and the Eternal, man—regenerate man, learns from God the joy of giving, and the wisdom of giving, and the excellence of giving, and the necessity of giving. Then it becomes not merely a law, but a law *of liberty*, knocking off from the heart its old encasements and fetters—not merely its love, but *its law of* love, a delight made into principle, habit, and statute: it becomes its law of liberty, and its law of love, with the soul renewed and grafted into Christ, to do good unto all men as he shall have opportunity, hoping for nothing again. Vivified by union with a Loving, and Self-denying Head, the church becomes instinct with a love that denies self. Then she learns, with a meek, boastless profusion, to pour out—not for the world's gratitude or applause, but for her own Lord's sake and for her own sake—the steady beams and streamings of that reflected brightness, which

she has caught from her Redeemer, the Sun of her Righteousness.

II. And yet, established as the truth is by the testimony of that True and Faithful Witness, who is the manifestation of the Father and is to be the Judge of the race; confirmed as it is by the work of God in creation and providence; illustrated and commended as it has been by the Mission of Christ himself in Redemption; and re-enforced as it is by the experience of His Church as conformed to Him her self-renouncing Lord, the WORLD, NEVERTHELESS, IS DAILY AND GRAVELY DISPUTING THE PRINCIPLE.

Ask the wiser and subtler statesmen of our race, and the keen-eyed observers who have known most of mankind, what is their judgment as to the source of happiness. Intrust the Richelieus and the Walpoles, the Machiavels, the Chesterfields, and the Talleyrands, who were thought best to read human nature,

its favorite desires, and the springs whose touch soonest swayed it—intrust these shrewd and practiced men with the work of condensing their experience of society into maxims for the pursuit of happiness. Ask from their hands digests of the world's best precedents, and condensations of its most solemn and repeated adjudications. What would their beatitudes be?

Avarice would say: "Receive as much as decently you may, and give as little as you well can. This will insure the blessedness of wealth, and money answereth all things." Selfishness would cry: "Guard and even exaggerate your own rights; let others, your neighbors, look to their own. Each for himself. The merciful and the meek are likely to be sorely pillaged and rudely jostled in the world's fierce throng." Craft would exclaim: "Keep, with the open look and the courtly word, the close thought. To seem is indispensable: to be, is matter of indifference.

When yourself bound to others, let it be with cords of flax; when others are to be bound to you, use links of steel." Ambition would say: "Blessed are the lofty in spirit and the quick in resentment. None harms them and is himself left unharmed. For to such is the empire of the world."

And when they have collated their results and completed their task, read to them the opening sentences of the Sermon on the Mount, and quote to them from our text Paul's quotation from his Master, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the merciful, the persecuted, the peace-makers, and the pure in heart. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven; and they see God. More blessed are they giving than receiving." Your hearers and yourselves see at once the harsh dissonance. The beatitudes of earth's sages and the beatitudes of the Only Wise God, the One Redeemer and Judge of the world, are found to be two codes of very distinct and uncongenial character.

And, whether conservative or progressive, traditionists or revolutionists, the men who are of opposite schools as to social order and as to national government, are too readily agreed, like Herod the Idumæan, and Pilate the Roman, in scouting Jesus, and what seems to them His creeping philosophy. The fanatical Conservative cries: "WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT!" and thus worships Decay as well as Life, and throws upon God, the Holy, the parentage and dishonor of Satan's interpolations and blots cast upon God's good handiwork. And, on the opposite side, the fanatical Progressive shouts: "WHATEVER IS, IS WRONG!" virtually swelling thus the cry and the train of the old Anarch, Satan, and impeaching Jehovah's past and present government of His own universe as a failure and a pretense. Take the beatitudes of either class, and you wrong your own nature and dishonor God's good providence. The one class, as they regard the heathen, will tell you that the

Pagan is very gentle, and happy, and virtuous, and needs not to be Christianized; or that he is an irreclaimable brute not to be converted, and whose strange vileness should not discompose your cultured ease. The other class would persuade you that it is Christendom itself that is all wrong and heartless; and that Christianity needs recasting, or is "a religion of old clothes," deserving to be rejected, in mass and at once, as a spent delusion. Their mission is to convert Christianity into Pantheism, and to evaporate the Redeemer into a myth.

And both classes will be found uniting in the general conclusion, that Christian Missions are most commonly but a waste of efforts, and time, and funds; and that the men and women who go forth from the lands of Christian security, and order, and purity, and freedom, and peace, to the idolater, perchance at the antipodes, seeking his conversion to Christ, are the best of them but well-meaning

dreamers, and far oftener meddlesome fanatics or even deliberate cheats. Yet let any man for himself examine the full record of what Christian Missions have been, and of what Christian Missionaries have given and have accomplished; and then let such an inquirer turn to some pages of our contemporary literature, the authors of which would resent the imputation of positive inhumanity or of shameless skepticism, and how strange seems the delineation these writers have ventured to furnish of what, according to them, Missions are abroad, and of what, according to them, the friends of Missions are at home.

Christ himself, the Chief Apostle and Missionary of our profession, complained of His own generation that they would not receive Wisdom in any of her varying moods. When she used the plaintive reed of John the Baptist, the preacher of repentance, they would not mourn. He was frenzied or possessed, say they: "Behold, he hath a devil." And

when Wisdom touched the more cheerful stops of the Gospel, the world would not bound or leap to the blither measure. This Christ, cry they, is no better than we: "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." False Messiahs they hailed. Such men brought the world's choice passwords and recognized tokens, and were welcome. But the true Messiah they refused and crucified. So was it with His apostles. Paul, whose quotation of his Master's language furnishes our text, had forsworn rank, ease, wealth, and power, and the friendship of the entire Sanhedrim, to embrace a career of privation and reproach, travel and conflict, closed with the vista of martyrdom. In so doing he had given all possible pledges of sincerity. Yet he declared that, with all his integrity and disinterestedness, he and his fellow-laborers were regarded as "deceivers." "Deceivers—YET TRUE," he calmly and with a noble brevity adds; and there leaves the matter.

But when we see what, in the old East, and in our own new-found West, Christian Missions have attempted, and have, despite the world's derision, achieved; and then look to the command of Christ, unqualified and unrepealed, for the evangelization of the whole earth; and then survey the vast mass of Heathen darkness yet to be dispelled, and of Pagan wretchedness yet to be relieved; and then see how scanty as yet the largest drafts made on the forces of the churches at home for the Missionary battle-field; and when, amid all our gratulations and gratitude to man and to God for a growing liberality, and for a juster estimate of the work, we yet see how small are the funds proffered and how few the laborers enlisted in comparison to the magnitude of the enterprise; and then, must see these merest dribblings and tiny streamlets of sympathy clogged, by the censures and scoffings of men nominally Christian, in lands whose literature owes every thing to Christ's

Gospel, and in nations whose liberties bourgeoned out of the Christian development of conscience, and out of the Saviour's revelation of our brotherhood;—our souls are often stirred with a sad indignation. We are ready to ask: And what right had your old Pagan forefathers in the Son of Jesse, which the modern Pagan has not, this very day, in the very same Redeemer? We are almost ready to look up and cry: Oh Lord! come down to vindicate that missionary work, which was Thine own parting legacy at Thine ascension, to the churches whom Thou leftest behind. Thou who didst, in ancient times, descend to answer and hush the cavillings of thy servant Job against thy Providence—wilt Thou not, oh Nazarene! come down among us to plead to the indictment that men have found against this work of evangelizing the nations—attempted at Thy bidding—attempted, against all odds in numbers and resources, in Thy strength—attempted in love for Thy kingdom

and in jealousy for Thy beloved name? Come down, Man of Sorrows! to the woes of a Church hindered, perplexed, and rent, in her feeble and wavering obedience to Thy blessed Commission! Come down, that the world may be abashed in her resistance to the march of the cross-bearing churches gone forth to bring light to the nations sitting in the shadow of death. Come down, that Thine own churches may be heartened, and reconciled, and inspirited to a bolder onset, and a more close and persistent siege upon the strongholds of darkness. Come down, that Thy people may learn, in lowly trustfulness, more unreservedly to bring their substance, their prayers, their children and themselves, to the great task which Thou didst inaugurate and which we have inherited—the subdual of the world to the obedience of the faith.

The world's indictment says of Thy missionary servants—now that they are mercenary, living in pomp and luxury among

heathen paupers—now, that they are incompetent, men who are unfit for pastorates at home, but who have episcopates abroad—here, that they are oppressive, and make their island converts drudges and beasts of burden—and there, that they are morose and gloomy, denying to the Pagan his old, gleeful pastimes, and the hereditary dances and merry-makings of his nation—now again, that they are untruthful, sending home exaggerated accounts of success, where their converts are but a score, and their Bibles are to the new owners but a mere jest and drug; that they are visionary and impracticable, telling the rude idolater of mysteries that he can never comprehend, and neglecting civilization, to give Christianity first—or again, on the opposite side, that they are mechanical and secular laborers, neglecting the Gospel, and busy about the civilization, agriculture, and trades of their flock—at one time, that they are schismatics transplanting to the world's ends

the intricate varieties of the sects that divide us at home—at another time, that they neglect the exactnesses of truth, and cultivate as fraternal a dangerous assimilation to other less pure communions than their own—that, they are unscientific, lagging far behind the age, for that Modern Ethnology has found the nations of some mission-fields inferior and distinct races, whom we can not hope to stay on their way to extermination, as being tribes but little removed from the ape—that, they are partial and unpatriotic, overlooking the pauperism and vice at home, to drain the sympathies and purses of the poor, for the far barbarian on the further side of the globe—that, they are wasteful and murderous, squandering useful talents, and valuable influence, and untold treasures, and female loveliness, and manly enterprise—upon distant, and romantic schemes that can not succeed, and that even if successful, can never repay the lavish expenditure of means and lives.

Such are some of the motley counts of the indictment. We do not undertake to adjust their internal janglings, and contradictions. The entire effect of the complaint, is, that it is not wise or right thus to "GIVE," in the outlay upon remote and chimerical crusades, resources and laborers that are needed at home—and would "RECEIVE" more gratitude and success there—and all this done, it is said, at the bidding of incompetent, and untrustworthy conductors.

Shall the quiet graves of Eliot, and of Schwartz, of Brainerd, and Carey and Martyn, and Vanderkemp, and Pacalt, Rhenius, and Judson, and Poor, be summoned to open and send out their sleepers to reply to this impeachment? Shall the excellent and devoted women who, like the beloved Persis, labored much in the Lord, and now sleep on heathen shores, be called to move before us, in their long and meek array of sorrows endured, and blessings won, and holy memories

bequeathed in the missionary work? We might say: Were these such men and women, as the scorner has painted; and left they no deeper and better mark on Heathenism, than is alleged? Or, going up to earlier ages, shall Paul be asked to come back; and revising his epistles, to blot out thence the record of his own missionary toils, and to quench the infectious example of his own missionary devotedness, that have seemed to authorize the modern undertakings so sternly arraigned? No, my friends. The fault—if fault it be—has deeper roots than these; and claims a higher patronage and parentage—than apostle could give it. It goes back of the Peters, and the Johns, to the Author of the great missionary impulse of Pentecost. The roots of the wrong—if such we must count it—run deep under the cross of the Nazarene. His words, just before His ascension, have furnished the warrant of the Missionary work. —Come down then—might we not justly and

in all reverence say? come down, Nazarene! Brother, and Redeemer, and Master! for the wise men of the world have revised Thy beatitudes, and indicted Thy laborers, and would prohibit the upbuilding of Thy world-wide temple.

III. We reach, thus, our concluding topic. Christ's beatitude of giving, as of something that is more honored, and happy, and excellent, than receiving, is THE JUSTIFICATION OF MODERN MISSIONS. And these exemplify, renew, and reinforce the old injunction.

1. The history of the past gives us to read the duty of the present and the future.

We know not of any one of the counts of the world's present indictment, that might not have found some plausible equivalent to be pleaded in Paul's time, when the proposal was made to visit and evangelize the Briton, the Gaul, the German, the Northman, the Spaniard or the Thracian, our own Pagan fore-

fathers, the outlying subjects or borderers of the old Roman Empire. Then, as now, the kingdom of God came not with observation; and a Roman shipmaster visiting Cenchrea the port of Corinth, or touching while the text was uttered at Miletus, might have gone home, as some shipmasters now do from the land where modern missionaries toil, and have reported, as they report, that no signs were seen in the market or on the quay, of the efficacy of the missionary's labors. The gospel, then as now, was quiet as leaven, and noiseless as the sunbeam in its work. Then, as now, the workmen were summoned by a Voice which the world could not hear, and leaned on an Arm which the world could not see. And the inference was easily and promptly drawn, that the energy was that of delusion and fanaticism: while apostles and neophytes, moved meekly onward, with the confession, "Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. The weapons

of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." But when the church read on the despised cross, her ensign, the inscription JEHOVAH NISSI, the Lord is my banner; and read over the upper-chamber or the underground catacomb, where a few poor Christians convened to pray, the further inscription JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, the Lord is there, the Gentile thought himself entitled to jest at both standard and captain. Faith sees the fluttering of the old ensign, yet unworn and untorn, and reads over the gathering for prayer the old pledge that the Omnipotent walks invisibly there. Then, as now, the work was first with individuals, and then to reach the masses: not, as objectors would now have it, first with masses and nations, thus finally to win individuals. Then, as now, there were destitution, irreligion, and crime in the hamlets of Palestine, and in the lanes of Jerusalem, while Jewish Christians were carrying

the gospel to the furthest and most barbarous borders of the Roman Empire. The scenes even of Pentecost left myriads still wretched, and wicked, in the villages, synagogues, and temple of the Hebrew people, and of the Holy Land. Then, Paul, if found at his tent-making, or met on ship-board while giving directions to prevent the escape of the sailors from the wreck, might have been charged with sinking his spiritual task into a merely mechanical and artisan activity, as some modern missionaries now are charged. Then, as now, nations were hostile, and slow to allow a common descent, and recognize a mutual brotherhood. Then, as now, the church had schisms, and sects, and variances, and scandals. Then, as now, many a home was left desolate—and many a choice gift lavishly expended—and many a life lost in carrying out Christ's broad and imperative commission. Then, as now, the saints had their poor kindred and neighbors at home, as well as their Pagan pension-

ers abroad. Then, as now, the enterprize looked romantic—chimerical—absurd—and even impious, to the sages who had never so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost—and to the courtiers who gathered Cæsar's revenues, and fluttered around Cæsar's banquets, and watched Cæsar's uncertain glance, and changeful fancies, and had no image of a hope or of a duty, apart from the despot and his throne—and to the philosophers, who had never been consulted by the Infant of Bethlehem, and by the Sufferer of Golgotha, as to the propriety of His advent, and the sufficiency of His resources, and the promise of His success. And without their sanction, could He have the presumption to hope for prosperity?

But what was the actual result? What are now, and here, and in your civilization, and in your literature and in your homes, and in your handicraft arts, and in your political immunities—what, I say, are now the tangi-

ble results of that godliness, which then had and which yet keeps the promise of the life that now is, as well as of the life to come? What are now, North and South, and East and West, the financial and legal and household results left behind in this America of the nineteenth century, as received by you from the gifts of prayer, and toil, and sympathy, and wealth, and talent, and life, bestowed upon you by the Christians of the first, and succeeding centuries?

2. But you are weary of the protracted duty? Missions are to be sustained through so many years and against so many incidental embarrassments and reverses, say you? If you refuse the performance of the trust as onerous or impossible, then relinquish the trust funds put for that explicit end in your keeping. Give back to the Master what you have received from Him. He instituted the Christian Church, not to be like the Jewish, merely a hearth for preserving the truth; but

as a light-house reared to diffuse the truth. For this end was it shaped, and to this purpose its site and date were both chosen. Must you refuse to give to *strangers*—uncouth barbarians whom you never saw? Then relinquish what you in an earlier age received from those who were *strangers* to the blood of your fathers, and from men to whom your ancestors seemed rude and forlorn barbarians. You have no special interest in posterity and the coming centuries? Then surrender the long arrears of compounded interest and enlightenment and happiness that your own century has inherited from the self-sacrificing men who evangelized your ancestry when old Rome was slowly moldering, or had already littered Europe with the shattered fragments of her fall. You can not work for God? Then rise magnanimously superior to the meanness of receiving aught more from God. If the old Jehovah of Moses, and David, and Paul—if the Emmanuel, for whom the Goth

and the Briton, your rude and Pagan forefathers, dropped their grim idols—the Emmanuel invoked by the confessors of the Protestant Reformation from the dungeons where they pined and the stakes where they blazed—the Emmanuel adored by the Puritans, who were the foster-fathers of your political freedom—the Emmanuel served by your own Revolutionary fathers who fell at many a point in the long agony of your emancipation—if the Lord God, True and Mighty, in whom these your predecessors trusted, be not worth obeying, He certainly should not be foraged upon. First, produce and renounce every benefit received from Him and His gospel, and His churches; and then, break off all further dependence upon Him, and all further deference to His missionary statutes.

And were the Nazarene to come down and ask you to surrender whatever you received from His old loyal servants in Puritan, medi-

æval, or primitive times; were He to pick out of the web of our social well-being every thread that Christian faithfulness had inwrought into its texture, often wetting it in the weaving with bitter tears and dripping blood—where, we ask it, were to-morrow your States, your parchment Constitution, and your national union? where your wealth, freedom, and national prosperity? It would be left a heap of tangled ravellings, without shape, strength, or worth.

From interminable intestine wars, constant, purposeless, and fruitless as the fights of kites and crows—from infanticide—from mediæval despotism—from mediæval ignorance, much has this Gospel done to relieve you. And having received much, would you give nothing? In God's law and polity, the talent hoarded becomes soon the talent forfeited and confiscated. The lamp set only under a bushel, is not likely to be replenished with oil by the Great Head of the Church, who

walks in wise supervision among her golden candlesticks. The man, the church, the tribe, or the land that would hold their own, as loaned from Christ, must put their talent to usury for Christ. To give is a generous protest against the besetting sin of selfishness, and a filial emulation and a faint imitation of the Divine Fatherhood evermore laying up and laying out for His earthly children. It is the purest of happiness to see others by us made happy for both worlds. It is the surest and directest road to national greatness and national unity—to the removal of war, and bondage, and pauperism from our world.

3. But the friends of Missions look too far, and overlook the near? You are the friend of *the poor at home?* We rejoice to hear that utterance. But as yet we have known of no truer friends and fellow-helpers in this your good work—no more fast allies that the poor in Christian Britain and Christian America have found—than the holders of Evangelical

doctrine and the friends of Evangelical Missions. John Howard, who guaged the prisons of Europe when Despotism sat at the gate holding the keys, and when Pestilence cowered in the vaults, filling them with death; Elizabeth Fry; Nesmith, the father of City Missions; and, to name living men, Lord Shaftesbury, the patron of Ragged Schools; know you of truer philanthropists at home than these? All have held in substance the evangelical faith that modern Missions are scattering. The principles active abroad, have not shown themselves bed-ridden at home. Where have Ragged Schools found their self-denying teachers? How generally in the ridiculed and calumniated men and women of Evangelical churches sustaining with meek zeal the work of relieving Pauperism at home and the work of relieving Heathenism abroad, undeterred by the contempt that visits the one task, unelated by the flattery that rewards the other task. They have elsewhere

their record, and look elsewhere for their recompense.

4. But you would economize? Missions are costly? So is very much else that is directly necessary, but that is only indirectly remunerative. And, in your thrift, would it be true economy to cut up your level streets and your broad avenues into building-lots, the land that these roads engross being so eminently valuable; or, would you seek to make more useful your canals and your navigable rivers by drawing them all off into mill-races and garden-troughs? No, the free course of the highway, be it by land or by water, is worth more than it costs, and worth far more than the soil it covers and occupies. And the Gospel is such a highway from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, for the descent and ascent of blessings. That Gospel sustained at home and sent abroad, is worth far more than all of expense that it incurs. Your freedom, your education, your morals,

your material prosperity, can not travel over an inclosed Gospel, more than could your traffic over barred roads, and your floating commerce over obstructed river-beds or along a waterless gully. And they who would suppress the Gospel in hopes thus to swell the purse, may find that the God of the Gospel does not need their patronage quite as much as they would suffer from the withdrawal of His.

Missions! Christ himself instituted them, and who shall decry and repudiate them? The love of Christ necessitates them. Stifle that love in its aspirations of sympathy for the lost, and of gratitude to the Redeemer, you leave the Church of the Living God a corpse. To give to that blessed work is to trust prophecy, and to hasten the Millennial glory. It is to approach, and grow meet for, the Heavenly blessedness. To give as under God's eye, and as into Christ's own torn palm, and at Christ's explicit call, is to invest

our hopes, and our recompense, where death can not scatter the treasure, in the eternal and imperishable world.

Yet bear with us, as we turn to the objector again, whether his quarrel be with the pulpit at home, or with the foreign laborer, with the Missionary prospects, or with the Missionary assessments.

1. And some may say perhaps: If Christianity be so generous, and in its view to give be indeed much more blessed than to receive, why should its preachers accept the contributions of others? We answer to this: Do they receive more than they give? Is it near as much that is given to them, as is given by the faithful of their number to their fellow-man? Is it nothing that they give their days, and often their wakeful nights to exhausting toil, and consuming care—that they give their feelings to be wounded by the rude, the frivolous, and the penurious—that they

forego competency, and worldly distinction often, and often large affluence, all in themselves, goods as dear, perhaps, to these men, as to you, and had these men chosen it, not more accessible, perhaps, to you than to them. Has not the Presidential chair of our country been occupied notoriously, at some times, by men inferior in intellect, and attainments, and moral worth to Timothy Dwight, and Archibald Alexander, and John M. Mason, and Jonathan Edwards? And when these Christian pastors (the most of them living since your republic opened to all her citizens the path of civil promotion), forswore, in order to pursue the work of benefitting souls, the hopes of worldly aggrandizement, turning their talents to less gainful, and less applauded pursuits—did they give nothing? When the Christian Missionary renounces home, and the comforts of kindred, and civilization, and political freedom, and general intelligence, for a dwelling amid Pagan desolations—be it

among Zulus, Karens, Cherokees, Sandwich Islanders, Chinese, Hindoos, or Esquimaux—does he give nothing?

2. But missions are imperfect, and their counsels are often divided. We are not aware that it is before perfect churches at home, and before a nation without parties, and without partisanships, that we are called to meet this complaint. Nor do we remember where it is written in Scripture that primitive Christians, to correct the dissensions between Paul and Barnabas, withdrew their sympathies, prayers, and kindly offices, from them both. "As deceivers—yet true," said Paul of himself and of his contemporary fellow-missionaries. In our times, as in the earlier days, there have been defects, and unworthiness among this class. But now we may say of them in mass, as then: they have been TRUE. True to their missionary charge have they been; true to the interests of education, and freedom; true to the sanctity of the household; and

true to the cause of worldly science; for have not Ethnology, and Geography, and Philology, owed many of their most noticeable advances to the energy, and fidelity, of Christian Missionaries? True have they been to the souls they failed to win, and true to those, their converts, whom they gathered and formed into churches; true to the churches at home, who sent them; and true to their Master; and His own Spirit has attested their loyalty by blessing their testimony, and crowning their prayers. They have truly translated God's true oracles; and the Maker and Guardian of the book, has stamped His approval on their toil. Before men and here indeed, they may have been long, and may even now remain unacknowledged, or ill-appreciated. But they serve a Captain in whose blessed and spiritual campaigns every corpse of the lowly private soldier, that finds his grave, in the bottom of some deep trench, in the lowermost layer of the ghastly bridge

over which his successors pass to the victorious storming, and to the planting of their banners on the outward bulwarks, is to be recovered, and shares ultimately in the glory and joy of the final triumph.

3. The successes seem long delayed and the obstacles portentous? But of that Captain and Chief Apostle of their profession there runs an old edict registered in the councils of eternity—"AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER." Not merely on His hand; though the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in that hand, and none shall be able to pluck His people out of that pierced palm. Nor merely on His arm; though His Church shall come up out of the wilderness leaning on this the arm of her Beloved, and He shall in that arm fold and carry the lambs of His flock, as the Good Shepherd, gathering them from the far West and the remote East. But upon His shoulder, the seat of strength, lying near and over the heart, the citadel of

the life—the shoulder, the symbol of highest and indomitable energy. For He, "the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God," shall put forth all His own proper and divine might for the sustentation of His own cause and kingdom. As the shepherd leaves the ninety and nine to reclaim the one straggler, and bears it home on his shoulder rejoicing, so shall the King in Zion make His loving care and His infinite power manifest by seeking out the distant, and bringing back the desolate and estranged from the far mountains of Paganism. He is the Power of God unto the salvation of His Church. That power is the invincible hope of our whole undertaking. You tell us of the changes, treaties, policies, and edicts of earthly government. We read of "*the government.*" It is centralized on that one Arm, over that one Heart. And as the priest put of old his shoulder to that ark where lay the governing law of the people, bearing it unharmed above the sands of the

desert and the dried bed of Jordan, even so has this potent High Priest, amid the desert wanderings of His people, reserved the government to come in all its chargeableness, and the government to come in all its burdensomeness—the law, and the ark holding the law—the Covenant of Missions and the Ark of that Covenant—upon His own stalwart shoulder. This is our trust, and this is all our desire. The shifting sands of party, and sect, and school, reach not that Ark, Covenant, and Government. The currents of popular agitation, and of transitory fashion, and of ecclesiastical strife, shall roll harmless far below, or be dried up and disappear from its pathway, as that Ark passes victoriously along, upborne on His Omnipotence and Faithfulness, to its sure and universal supremacy.

4. But these ever-recurring assessments for the missionary work tease and weary? How shall the world answer, and how His enemies face Him, when the accused becomes the ac-

cuser, and the great Missionary confronts us with His own indictment? You have fretted at His claims. But what claims He had as upon yourselves. Not merely your Redeemer and Elder Brother by the incarnation, but also your Divine Maker, and each day your Preserver, how will it be when He shall ask account, not of *your own*, but of *His own?* You breathed His air, and tilled His soil, and were using, in body and in soul, powers of His, loaned for your occupancy. How will men reply, when Christ shall impeach them for neglecting their own souls, and neglecting their brethren, and neglecting the duty enjoined by their own consciences and in His Scriptures? How meet His indictment of them for indignities heaped on Himself, in His own direct, and frequent, and solemn, and personal mission to their own hearts, as He knocked at the door and was denied admittance? He shall ask their reasons, then, for scorn of that blessed Book, dank and sodden

with His atoning blood—for waste of that Sabbath instituted by Him, claimed by Him, due to Him, but embezzled from Him. He shall impeach them for receiving much and rendering nought—for misemploying Time and neglecting Eternity—for wronging Earth and forfeiting Paradise—while providences, warnings, convictions, sanctuaries, pulpits, missions, and converts from heathenism, all shall be cited as witnesses on God's side, against the unfaithful steward compelled to unearth and confront the buried talent. To this impeachment how shall we plead? Who, as Balaam once mournfully asked, shall live when God doeth this? Who? They who have been Christ's true servants, whether at home or abroad. They shall live. None else. Are you one of them?

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